



## The Connecticut Women's Health Campaign

African American Affairs Commission  
American Heart Association  
Celebrate Women at UCONN Health Center  
Children's Health Council  
CT Association for Human Services  
CT Association of School Based Health Care  
CT Breast Cancer Coalition, Inc.  
CT Children's Health Project  
CT Chronic Fatigue Immune Dysfunction and Fibromyalgia Assoc.  
CT Citizen's Action Group  
CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence  
CT Coalition for Choice  
CT Community Care, Inc.  
CT Legal Rights Project  
CT NARAL  
CT NOW  
CT Sexual Assault Crisis Services  
CT Women and Disability Network, Inc.  
CT Women's Consortium, Inc.  
Disability Services, City of New Haven  
Hartford College for Women  
Institute for Community Research  
Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission  
National Association of Social Workers-CT Chapter  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Ovarian Cancer Coalition CT  
Office for Women in Medicine, Yale University  
Older Women's League of NWCT  
Permanent Commission on the Status of Women  
Planned Parenthood of CT, Inc.  
Quinnipiac University Department of Nursing  
Ruthe Boyea Women's Center, Central CT State University  
UConn School of Allied Health  
UConn Women's Center  
Urban League of Greater Hartford, Inc.  
Valley Women's Health Access Program  
Women & Family Life Center

## CONNECTICUT WOMEN'S HEALTH CAMPAIGN

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## Osteoporosis Prevention and Treatment

The Connecticut Women's Health Campaign (CWHC) supports the establishment of a prevention, early detection and treatment referral program for osteoporosis in the Department of Public Health.

### The Problem

- Osteoporosis is a serious degenerative bone disease that affects 28 million people in the United States, 80% of them women. It costs nearly \$14 billion per year in medical and related expenses, and severely affects the quality of life of those who have it.

### What Can Be Done?

- CWHC supports legislation to fund and require the state Department of Public Health to establish an osteoporosis prevention, early detection and treatment referral program. The program would focus on unserved or underserved populations (at or below 200% of the federal poverty level, or without health insurance that covers osteoporosis screening) 19 to 64 years of age. It would include an education component for the public regarding the disease and the benefits of prevention and early detection. It would also provide counseling and referral services for treatment.

### The Facts

- Osteoporosis is a preventable disease of the bones, which frequently has its roots in pregnancy and childhood. For this reason it is appropriate to call it "a pediatric condition with geriatric consequences." It most commonly stems from poor nutrition and lack of exercise in childhood and the teen years. This is the period of life when calcium is deposited in the bones, making them dense and healthy. Later in life, from about age 30 on, calcium is depleted from the bones. If the deposits of calcium built up early in life are insufficient, the bones become brittle and break more easily. Bone density screening exams that can monitor a woman's risk for an osteoporosis fracture are relatively quick, painless, and noninvasive.

- Osteoporosis is the major cause of bone fractures in older women. One of every two women over 50 will have an osteoporosis-related fracture. Hip fractures carry the most serious consequences. Twenty percent of those with hip fractures die within 12 months, and only half of those who survive can ever return to their normal activities.
- Risk factors for osteoporosis that can't be changed include gender, age, body size, and family history. Medications may play a role as well. Corticosteroids, such as those used by asthma sufferers, appear to bring about a reduction in bone mineral contents. Risk factors that can be changed are a diet low in calcium and Vitamin D, lack of weight-bearing exercise, smoking, and excessive use of alcohol.

### **For additional information, contact:**

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### **Sources:**

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